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An intensive 6-week summer readiness program held in the Beaver Area School District, Beaver, Pennsylvania, developed linguistic facility among 15 preschool children. Daily activities included discussion, picture study, creative arts, field trips, developing experience charts, and other nonlanguage arts activities. A combined experiential, visual-phonic, and kinesthetic approach was used with a variety of instructional materials. The most distinctive feature of the program was the use of primary typewriters during the daily 20-minute typing period. Teacher aids supervised classroom activities and joined the field trips to help each child sharpen his observational powers, enrigh his vocabulary, improve his language facility, and record observations for developing experience charts. At the end of the term, the children's physical, social, and mental readiness for first-grade work was evaluated by the team of teachers, and recommendations were made. First-grade test results favored intensive readiness training using the experiential approach for preschool children. (NS)

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Summer Programs

12B The Role of Preschool Programs
Thursday, April 25, 1:30-2:30

One hundred-fifty years ago Froeble pointed out that although learning begins in infancy, true education must begin in childhood, those active years between three and seven. For, childhood is the period of most rapid physical and mental growth; it is the time during which environment has its greatest influence; it is the age that is most receptive to learning.

More recently, Bloom analyzed and summarized the findings of almost one thousand researches on human characteristics and published his findings in Stability and Change in Human Characteristics (John Wiley, 1964). (1) His in-

vestigations clearly showed the tremendous importance of early learning. Its influence is reflected in the increasing interest in preschool activities and the passing of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1965 to provide for headstart programs.

In spite of the recognized value of early training, not one of our states has compulsory education before age seven and many still do not provide financial support for kindergartens. Only about 54 to 65 per cent of our five-year-olds are enrolled in preschool classes.

In my own state, established kindergartens do receive state support, and as new ones are organized they must be continued. Each community decides for itself whether to provide preschool experience and what age group may attend. This can create problems.

Compulsory school attendance age in Pennsylvania is eight years of age, but children may enter first grade as young as five years, seven months. In my own district preschool experience is offered to children who are four years, ten months of age, if the parents can provide transportation. Some children, therefore, miss kindergarten because of lack of transportation, and others must wait until they are almost six, or if the parents insist, enter first grade without the benefit of preschool training. Fortunately, we do not have many children who fall in either of these catagories.

Intensive Readiness Program

For the past two years, we have tried to ready these exceptional children for first grade thru an intensive six-week summer readiness program. Many factors are involved in reading readiness. Some are products of maturation; some are acquired abilities that may be taught. Tinker says a child is ready to read when "maturation, experience plus verbal facility and adjustment are sufficient to insure that he can learn in the classroom situation." (2) Consequently, our attention was directed to providing linguistic facility thru wide and varied experiences, and we hoped that emotional adjustments would be a by-product of these experiences. Our motto was, "Happy Learning;" our approach eclectic, a combination of experiential, visual-phonic, and kinesthetic.

To provide a background of experience, children were taken each week on trips by foot or bus. These trips included visits to the library, post office, farm, zoo, parks, historical points of interest, and picnics. Before each trip, children were readied thru discussion, picture study, and creative art. After each trip the children developed their own individual experience chart, and helped in the making of a large classroom chart.

One of our specific goals was to teach letter names and sound; Durrell maintains that the "two background abilities known to be important to beginning reading are visual and

auditory-discrimination of word elements"..and "if the child cannot tell letters apart, it is futile for the teacher to teach him words." (3) To teach the letter names and sounds, the Murphy-Durrell Speech-to-Print materials were used. (4) Those of you who are familiar with this material will know that it is divided into two parts: first, the study of the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet; and second, the learning of 14 safety words. Both parts of the program were used simultaneously: the letters, to assure success in reading; the sight words, for their practical use on trips.

The local newspaper became a useful supplementary tool for identifying upper and lower case letters as they were taught. The alphabet song became a daily part of our program to encourage the auditory learning of the letter names.

Visual materials were numerous and varied. For twenty minutes each morning, the EDL readiness film strips were used with the controlled reader. The children viewed the strips attentively and became quite proficient in seeing likeness and differences in pictures, forms, and words. Basic sight words, other than the Murphy safety words, were taught in context thru the use of charts, blackboards, and writing. The SRA Red Book (5) readiness materials were used to improve their hand-eye coordination. On our field trips we looked for known letters and sight words on buildings, billboards, and even in skywriting.

Muscle coordination was developed in many ways. Some children had never seen or used crayons or paints; had never cut and pasted pictures. Each day a new art medium was used to acquaint the children with materials and give them practice in the use of their hands. Some lessons were carefully planned so that following directions was important; others were self-directed and free expression. However, all were integrated in some way with other class activities. For example, we made alphabet books which contained printed, typed, and cut-out letters, printed and original pictures. The covers required pasting, glittering, color identification, and bow tying. The latter was practiced on other materials until success was attained. (The teacher did not tie the bows for them.)

Distinctive Feature

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of our program was the use of primary typewriters with these children. Every day, the children had a twenty minute typing period, supervised by an aide on a one-to-one basis. Each child first learned to type his own name. Then, he was taught the letters of the alphabet in the order taught during the speech-to-print lessons. The child would be shown the letter and told its name. He would then say the letter and type it. In a day or two, he was permitted to select words which interested him. By the end of the first week or two, he would type a short

creative story, which he would illustrate in his Very Own Book.

The aides selected for the project included mothers, college students majoring in education, and recent high school graduates. Both summers we were fortunate to have both men and women aides. Each aide was responsible for three children. During the class periods they sat with the children and supervised their activities, to that mistakes could be reduced to a minimum. On field trips, their responsibilities were four-fold: first, to sharpen the children's observational powers by assisting in the recognition of signs, words, and objects of interest; second, to increase the child's vocabulary by identifying observed birds, animals, and objects by their class and specific names (red birds--cardinals.); third, to improve the child's language facility by asking questions requiring responses using the new found knowledge; and fourth, to keep a record of at least ten observations to use as reminders for future typing and story lessons.

Other Activities

Health, science, and mathematics were not neglected. Care was taken that hands were carefully washed before eating and teeth scrubbed after. A few children had to be taught both of these activities. Our science projects consisted in growing flowers and beans for transplantation to home gardens, collecting seeds, leaves, and flower specimens, and attempting

to hatch chickens in the classroom. Arithmetic concepts were developed through counting steps, stairs, cookies, straws, children, or anything else appropriate. Every effort was made to help children learn words concerning measurements such as time, temperature, money, and weight, and to discover the mathematics around them.

Class periods were never longer than twenty minutes. The classroom teachers presented all the new materials to the entire class of fifteen pupils. Then, they worked with groups of five children on concept building. During the small group period, the aides worked individually with the children in the typing room, and the others were given small group instruction by the art teacher. The beginning and ending of each day were used for active, group activities. A schedule of the days activities is listed below.

Daily Schedule
9:30---12:30

9:30--9:40 Opening exercises: attendance
salute to flag
America
Action Songs

9:40--10:00 Readiness films: EDL set 4c
Teacher presents films and follows with class discussion
Children--opportunity to express themselves.

10:00--10:20 Activity time divided into three sedtions: A, B, C.

A. Typing one-to-one assistance from aides.	B. Development of Experience chart under teacher direction.	C. Hand and eye coordination experiences under direction of teacher-aide. Play activities.

10:20--10:40
Speech-to Print Lesson in group situation under teacher's direction. Learning letter names and sounds, playing games, singing songs, multiple response techniques. Aide assists.

10:40--11:00 REST AND LUNCH PERIOD FOR ALL. Children will wash hands, eat crackers and drink milk. Rest. Clean teeth.

11:00--11:20 Activities in three groups:

A. Experience Chart activities.	B. Teacher aide activities.	C. Typing activities.

11:20--11:40 Developing number concepts--Teacher directed.

11:40--12:00 Activities in three groups:

A. Teacher aide activities.	B. Typing activities.	C. Experience Chart activities.

12:00--12:20 Art and music activities under teacher direction.

12:20--12:30 Clean-up and home activities.

Evaluation

How were the children identified as being ready for first grade? Several measures of physical, mental, and social readiness were used. Each child was screened for physical readiness by the school nurses, and referrals made if any anomolies were found. Two forms of the Metropolitan Readiness tests were administered as pre-and post-tests. (6) Mental ability was measured by individual tests, SIT and (7) Peabody Picture Vocabulary test. Physical, number, and (8) social maturity by Banham's Maturity Level for School Entrance and Reading Readiness. All the data was summarized and pre- (9) sented to the teachers for final team evaluation and recommendation. Both summers, the results indicated, with one exception, that all the children were ready to read.

Were the children really ready? Were they able to read by the end of the first grade? The data on the first group indicates a positive, "YES". Three of the children ranked ninth in a class of 288 on the Gates Primary Reading Tests. (10) Their score was 3.9. Half of them ranked above the mid-point, and none of them were in the bottom twenty. The results of the second year have not been tabulated, but teacher evaluation in March indicates all but one will pass.

The data on these two programs indicates that children can profit from an intensive readiness summer program. It, also, suggests the advantage of a more structured, experiential

approach for regular kindergarten; one which creates in the child a wanting to know about books; that broadens interest in the environment, arts, and crafts; that helps to develop good work habits; and promotes social adequacy and courteousy.

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3. Durrell, Donald D. Improving Reading Instruction. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956, p. 42.

4. Durrell, Donald D. and Murphy, Helen A. Speech-to-Print Phonics. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964.

5. Thurston, Thelma Gwinn. SRA The Read Book. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1967.

6. Hildreth, Gertrude H., Griffiths, Nellie L., and McGauvran, Mary E. Metropolitan Readiness Test. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966.

7. Slosson, Richard L. Slosson Intelligence Test. East Aurora, New York: Slosson Educational Publications, 1963.

8. Dunn, Lloyd M. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Nashville: American Guidance Service, Inc., 1959.

9. Banhan, Katharine M. Maturity Level for School Entrance and Reading Readiness. Minneapolis: American Guidance Service, Inc., 1959.

10. Gates, Arthur I. Gates Primary Reading Tests. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, 1958.